GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH

ABST R A C T

Infrastructure and Investment Department - AP Digital Corporation Limited (APDC) - Request of APDC to accord permission to place the work order appointing M/s. Route Mobile Limited, Mumbai as Whatsapp Chat bot solutions provider as per terms and conditions - Accorded - Orders - Issued.

INFRASTRUCTURE & INVESTMENT (AIRPORTS) DEPARTMENT

G.O.Rt.No.83. Dated 10-11-2023.

Read the following:-

1. G.O.Ms.No.19, I&I Dept., dt 31.03.2020.
2. From the VC&MD, APDCL E-file No. ENE68-OPOM0MECO(SOCM)/2/2022-HRA, (Comp.No.1942028), Dated 26.06.2023.
3. G.O.Rt.No:14, I&I (Airports) Dept dt:23.02.2023.
4. From the VC & MD, APDC Lr.No.ENE68-OPOM0MECO(SOCM)/2/2022-HRA, dated 23-08-2023.
5. Minutes of the 18th Meeting of Directors of APDC held on 03-10-2023.

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ORDER:

In the G.O. 1st read above, Government has established AP Digital Corporation Limited (APDC) as a 100% State owned company by restructuring AP Content Corporation Limited (APCC) to build and maintain a state of the art Digital Media Infrastructure for effective and efficient Digital media planning and execution for GoAP., to create a feedback system for different welfare schemes, and to facilitate Government in understanding the right audience and improve the social mechanism to roll out new programs and schemes and to have the strategic and dedicated focus on leveraging Digital Media and established direct connection to the people and to align the vision of the Govt. to drive AP Digital Mission with certain objectives.

2. In the e-fle 2nd read above, the VC & MD, APDC has stated that the APDC desires to engage the citizens through an interactive WhatsApp Chatbot Solution with the primary objective to enable WhatsApp Chatbot interface with the citizen of Andhra Pradesh (AP) regarding various schemes and facilities offered by the Government of AP. Through this solution, the citizens can reach out to the Government entities of AP through a hassle-free process. The chatbot shall be managed by APDC with full authority and the vendor shall provide technical support only. The data used and generated through the chatbot shall be the property of the Andhra Pradesh Digital Corporation Limited and in no way, can be shared with anyone outside the Corporation. The security measures taken shall be reviewed every fort night to ensure best interests of the citizens.

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3. In the letter 4th read above, the VC & MD, APDC submitted that Government have issued guidelines and criteria for empanelment of Social and Digital Media Agencies for creating, planning, designing and releasing the Government advertisements through Digital Media and also for Empanelment of Websites vide G.O.Ms.No.15, I&I (Airports) Dept., Dated 31-12-2021 and G.O.Ms.No.16, I&I (Airports) Dept., Dated 31-12-2021, respectively. Vide G.O.Rt.No:14, I&I (Airports) Dept., dt:23.02.2023, Government has constituted the Technical Committee of Andhra Pradesh Digital Corporation Limited (APDC) to examine and review all DPRs, tenders /Bid documents relating to technical and financial bids of APDC as per procedure and submits recommendations to the APDC to take further action.

4. The VC & MD, APDC further submitted that in the fast changing scenario of the communication, different modes of Medias are highly effective in different times and now-a-days, the data availability and also cheapest to costly mobile phones are available in the market and the common people are easily accessible and are spending most of the time with mobile, the mobile phone is being the integral part of human being and APDC is effectively communicating with the people utilizing the Social media networks and informing the targeted groups with the authentic information of all the activities, schemes and programs of the government and all the above activities of campaigning's are essentially require the highest technical abilities in data science and software, which is lacking in conventional departments. VC & MD, APDC further submitted that APDC while implementing the work allotted to the Corporation and with an intention to introduce innovative measures, the Corporation intended to introduce Chatbot solution which will design, develop and customize and implement state of the art chatbot solution, after careful requirement analysis, in line with modern software development practices, hereafter referred as chatbot, capable of auto-answering citizen/user queries related to General Information on registration and Certifcates Downloads and other purposes and to provide each and every information required by an user through which the complete information will be passed on to the public who sought for such information on Government schemes/programmes.

5. The VC & MD, APDCL informed that APDC has called for RFPs with regard to WhatsApp chat bots solutions providers, duly mentioning the scope of the projects with all terms and conditions through open and competitive bidding. As against first tenders published on 28.12.2022, two agencies participated ie M/s.Sumanel Technical Venture Pvt. Limited, Pune and Router Mobile Limited Mumbai, of which single agency i.e., Route mobile Limited was technically qualifed as such the Committee has opined to go for fresh tenders to have more competitive bidding as per norms. Then APDC again called for RFPs a second call tenders through open and competitive bidding on dated: 21.02.2023. In response to the second call tenders, four agencies participated i.e., Route mobile limited, Tube light communications limited, M/s. Saru-webs Pvt. Limited and M/s. Gup shup technology India Pvt. limited, of which two agencies were technically qualifed i.e. M/s. Route mobile limited and M/s. Gup shup tech India Pvt. Limited but the price bids quoted by the two firms were not in conformity with tender documents financial bids etc. as such

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the committee has recommended to go fresh tenders again. APDC again floated RFP notification (third call) for Appointment of Chatbot Solution Providers (3rd call) and single agency i.e., M/S.Route mobiles limited, Mumbai has participated in tenders of third call and. The Technical Committee opened its technical bids and evaluated them. After having of detailed discussions and review on technical aspects, the single agency has qualified technically as per tender conditions. Then, the committee has opined to proceed further to open its financial bids through the committee. The qualified agency ie., M/s Route mobile limited Mumbai, has quoted its financial bidding with service charges as mentioned below:

1. Conversation in whatsapp service charge at the rates of 10.12% on the META pricing as per financial bidding.
2. META pricing as per regions/market in respect of India at the rate of INR 0.4843 per conversation for Business initiated rate and INR 0.2906 per conversation for user Initiated rate, as they are global rates offered by META.

6. VC & MD further submitted that as META rates /pricing as per regions are fixed globally which may not be changed or varied, but the service charges claimed by the agency may be negotiated as it was found to be excessive and higher side and hence, the Committee opined that, the service charges quoted by agency, may be negotiated to reduce further as per market demand and feasibility as per provisions to save the expenditure of chat bots and accordingly discussed to negotiate with rates of the agency to reduce further as per open and competitive rates. Accordingly, the agency i.e., Route mobile limited has agreed to reduce their service charges of 0.12% from 10.12 % i.e., to 10 % and confirmed through its email dated: 01.06.2023. The same negotiated rates have been reviewed by the committee and opined to renegotiate for further reduction of their rates as per provisions then the agency has agreed to reduce its rates further from 10.00% to 9.50% which is confirmed by their email dated:12.06.2023. The Technical committee has submitted the report dt:12.06.2023 wherein it was recommended that, the final negotiated rates of service charges @ 9.50% may be accepted as against @ 10.12% service charges quoted earlier in addition to META pricing as per financial bidding quoted in third call tenders in view of urgency and needy requirements of APDC/Govt.

7. The VC & MD, APDC submitted that as it is a new system, a number of appropriate agencies who are having proficiency in the field have not come for participation in bidding and in view of the recommendation of technical committee, requested the Govt. to approve the tender and accord permissions to APDC to place the work order engaging M/s. Route Mobile Limited, Mumbai as Whatsapp Chat bot solutions provider as per terms and conditions in view of urgency, with the Negotiated rates of service charges @ 9.50% per unit in addition to META pricing as per financial bidding. He has further submitted that an amount of Rs.100.00 crores have been allocated in the Budget for the financial year 2023-24 and the approximate expected expenditure (for business initiated conversations is Rs.9,54,59,253/- and for user initiated conversation is Rs.5,72,77,260/-) for both business initiated conversation & user initiated conversation services comes to Rs.15.27 crores per annum.

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8. The VC & MD, APDC further stated that the Board of Directors in the 18th Board meeting held on 3.10.2023 resolved to send the proposal for engaging M/s.Route Mobile Limited, Mumbai as Whatsapp Chat bot solutions provider as per terms and conditions. On this proposal, the Finance Department has advised the I&I Department to examine the proposal as per the recommendation of the technical committee and to take appropriate decision at their end by following due procedure. Further, they have stated that Finance Department has no comments to offer and no additional allocation will be made for this.

9. Government after careful examination, hereby permit the VC& MD., APDC to place the work order to appoint M/S. Route Mobile Ltd., Mumbai as WhatsApp Chatbot solutions provider to APDC, initially for a period of one year from the date of agreement, with Conversation WhatsApp service charge @ 9.50% and META pricing as per regions/market in respect of India @ INR 0.4843 per conversation for Business initiated rate and INR 0.2906 per conversation for user initiated rate and execute the necessary documents on behalf of APDC.

10. The expenditure towards appointing M/S. Route Mobile Ltd., Mumbai as WhatsApp Chatbot solutions shall be met from the allotted budget of APDC.

11. The Vice-Chairman & Managing Director, AP Digital Corporation Limited shall take necessary action accordingly.

(BY ORDER AND IN THE NAME OF THE GOVERNOR OF ANDHRA PRADESH)

N.YUVARAJ
SPECIAL CHIEF SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT(FAC)

To
The Vice Chairman & Managing Director, AP Digital Corporation Limited (APDCL).
The Director of Treasuries and Accounts, Andhra Pradesh.
The Pay and Accounts Officer, Andhra Pradesh.
The Accountant General, Andhra Pradesh, Vijayawada.
Copy to:
The P.S to Special Chief Secretary to Hon'ble C.M.
The P.S to Hon'ble Minister for I&I.
The P.S to C.S to Government.
The P.S to Spl.C.S to Govt., I&I Department.
The Finance (FMU-I&I, Energy and I&C) Department.
Sf/Scs
(C.No.INI01-APFN/18/2023-Airports) (Comp.No. 2135558)

//Forwarded :: By Order//

C. Kalyani
SECTION OFFICER